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Department of State

TELEGRAM

EXCISE

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INFO OCT-01 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-06 H-02 INR-06 L-03 NSAE-00
NSC-10 P-03 RSC-01 PRS-01 SS-14 USIA-12 UPW-01 IO-11
RSR-01 /086 W

020751

R 301300Z SEP 71
FM AMEMBASSY SAIGON
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 0572
INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK
AMEMBASSY PHNOM PENH
AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE
CINCPAC
USDEL FRANCE
AMCONSUL DANANG

DEPARTMENT OF STATE A/CDC/MR
REVIEWED BY _____ DATE _____
PORTIONS DENIED AS INDICATED

9/30/71

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 3 SAIGON 15681

SUBJ: ELECTION DEVELOPMENTS IN THE LAST TWO DAYS

REF: A. SAIGON 15519
B. SAIGON 15478
C. SAIGON 15586
D. SAIGON 15619
E. SAIGON 15537

1. SUMMARY: DEMONSTRATIONS AGAINST THE ELECTION SEPT 29-30 CONTINUED TO BE UNIMPRESSIVE EXCEPT FOR ONE OF SOME SIZE INVOLVING STUDENTS AT THE MAIN AN QUANG PAGODA IN DANANG. HOWEVER, THE KY-SPONSORED PEOPLE'S COORDINATING COMMITTEE AGAINST DICTATORSHIP IS SCHEDULED TO SPONSOR A LARGE PUBLIC MEETING ON OCT 1 WHICH, ALTHOUGH SUPPOSEDLY INTENDED AS NON-VIOLENT, COULD TURN INTO A CONFRONTATION WITH THE AUTHORITIES. KY CONTINUES APPARENTLY TO BE UNSUCCESSFUL IN OBTAINING THE ACTIVE COOPERATION EITHER OF GENERAL MINH, WHO HAD ISSUED A CHARACTERISTICALLY HIGH-SOUNDING COMMUNIQUE SEPT 29 (REF C), OR OF AN QUANG, WHO THE SAME DAY ORGANIZED ITS WON SEPARATE COMMITTEE. THE LATTER, CALLED THE PEOPLES STRUGGLE COMMITTEE FOR PEACE AND

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DEMOCRACY, ISSUED A VAGUE STATEMENT CALLING FOR A NATIONAL STURGGLE AGAINST THE ELECTION. AN QUANG APPARENTLY NOW FEELS A NEED TO PROTEST MORE ACTIVELY AND HAS OFFICIALLY CALLED FOR ABOYCOTT OF THE ELECTION BUT REMAINS BASICALLY CAUTIOUS AS INDICATED IN THE MODERATE TONE OF ITS COMMMUNIQUES. THE EXECUTIVE, BOTH IN THE SEPT 29 STATEMENT BY THE PRESIDENT AUTHORIZING THE SHOOTING OF FIREBOMBERS (REF D) AND IN A COMMUNIQUE SEPT 30 ON "COMMUNIST SABOTAGE" OF THE ELECTIONS, SEEMS TO BE TAKING A STIFFER POSTURE TOWARDS THE OPPOSITION. END SUMMARY.

2. DEMONSTRATIONS: VETERANS HELD SEVERAL SMALL AND UNEVENTFUL DEMONSTRATIONS IN SAIGON SEPT 29. PROTESTS THAT DAY WERE ON A LARGER SCALE THAN BEFORE IN THE PROVINCIAL CITIES BUT WERE STILL KEPT UNDER TIGHT POLICE CONTROL. IN DANANG SEVERAL HUNDRED STUDENTS CONFRONTED POLICE MOST OF THE DAY, WITH SEVERAL INJURED DURING A CLASH AT THE MAIN AN QUANG PAGODA IN DANANG. IN CAN THO POLICE USED TEAR GAS TO BREAK UP A BRIEF DEMONSTRATION BY VETERANS IN FRONT OF POLICE HEADQUARTERS. ANOTHER GROUP OF VETERANS ATTEMPTED WITHOUT SUCCESS TO ORGANIZE A DEMONSTRATION IN THE MAIN SQUARE OF DALAT. AN EXPLOSION OUTSIDE A GIA DINH RESTAURANT INJURED 24 PERSONS, BUT THE PERPETRATORS ARE STILL UNKNOWN. THE ADMINISTRATION HAS MOUNTED SEVERAL COUNTER DEMONSTRATIONS, INCLUDING ONE ON SEPT 30 BY ABOUT 40-50 PRO-GOVERNMENT VETERANS IN SAIGON SPECIFICALLY ATTACKING SENATOR HUYNH VAN CAO FOR HIS CRITICISM OF THE ELECTION. SEVERAL CITY COUNCILLORS, MOST OF THEM ENDORSERS OF VICE-PRESIDENT KY, BEGAN A 24-HOUR HUNGER STRIKE THE SAME DAY AND HUNG ANTI-ELECTION BANNERS OUTSIDE THE WINDOWS OF THE COUNCIL CHAMBERS IN CITY HALL.

3. AN QUANG ATTITUDE HARDENS: ON SEPT 28 VARIOUS POLITICAL AND RELIGIOUS ELEMENTS CONVENED AT THE SAIGON AN QUANG PAGODA AND ESTABLISHED A "PEOPLES' STRUGGLE COMMITTEE FOR PEACE AND DEMOCRACY." THE COMMITTEE'S LEADERSHIP CONSISTS PRIMARILY OF MINH ASSOCIATES AND AN QUANG /LIES BUT OVERLAPS TO SOME EXTENT WITH KY'S "PEOPLES' COORDINATING COMMITTEE AGAINST DICTATORSHIP (REF B)." AN QUANG RECTOR THICH THIEN HOA REPORTEDLY DECLINED FOR THE TIME BEING THE CHAIRMANSHIP OF THE STEERING COMMITTEE AND LOTUS SENATOR VU

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VAN MAU IS APPARENTLY THE ONLY AN QUANG PRICIPAL TO ACCEPT A LEADERSHIP POSITION.

OTHER MEMBERS OF THE STEERING COMMITTEE ARE FORMER SENATOR NGUYEN PHUOC DAI, DEPUTY HO VAN MINH (GENERAL MINH'S FORMER RUNNING MATE), LWWYERS BUI CHANH THOI AND TRAN NGOC LIENG, POLITICIAN NGUYEN THANH VINH (NEW PEOPLE S MOVEMENT), AND DEPUTY TRAN VAN TUYEN, THE ONLY NEW AN QUANG ALLY. ALTHOUGH KY IS NOT REPRESENTED ON THE AN QUANG COMMITTEE, AT LEAST FOUR MEMBERS OF HIS COMMITTEE AGAINST DICTATORSHIP ARE ALSO ASSOCIATED WITH THE NEW BUDDHIST GROUP--MADAME DAI, DEPUTIES TRAN VAN TUYEN, NGUYEN HUU CHUNG AND DOUNG VAN BA. TUYEN AND MADAME DAI HAVE BOTH TOLD US THAT THE COMMITTEE IS INTENDED AS A LONGER TERM EFFORT TO ORGANIZE A MORE UNIFIED OPPOSITION IN CONTRAST TO KY'S COMMITTEE WHICH THEY SAY IS A TEMPORARY KY INSTRUMENT AGAINST THIEU.

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L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-10 P-03 RSC-01 PRS-01 SS-14 USIA-12
RSR-01 /086 W
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R 301300Z SEP 71
FM AMEMBASSY SAIGON
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4. THE STRUGGLE COMMITTEE RELEASED A STATEMENT ON SEPT. 30 SIGNED BY A NUMBER OF POLITICAL AND RELIGIOUS FIGURES, INCLUDING SENATOR VU VAN MAU AND VENERABLES HUYEN QUANG AND PHAP TRI, AN QUANG SECRETARY GENERAL AND SECOND VICE RECTOR, RESPECTIVELY. THE STATEMENT NOTED THAT THE "COMMITTEE'S STRUGGLE WOULD BE PERMANENT, ALL-OUT AND NATIONWIDE UNTIL THE ESTABLISHMENT OF DEMOCRATIC ADMINISTRATION CAPABLE OF RESTORING PEACE TO THE NATION."

5. ALSO ON SEPT. 30 THE AN QUANG BUDDHISTS ISSUED TWO FORMAL COMMUNIQUES CRITICIZING THE ELECTION AND THE THIEU REGIME IN STRONGER TERMS THAN AN QUANG HAS USED HERETOFORE. THE COMMUNIQUES CALLED FOR BUDDHISTS TO BOYCOTT THE BALLOTTING, DISPLAY ANTI-ELECTION BANNERS, AND ATTEND PAGODA PRAYER SERVICES ON OCTOBER 3. NO DOUBT THE STRONGER TONE WAS ADOPTED IN RESPONSE TO THE PRESSURES MENTIONED IN REF A. HOWEVER AN QUANG HAS REPORTEDLY INSTRUCTED ITS CADRE NOT TO PARTICPATE IN DEMONSTRATIONS AGAINST THE REGIME AND DANANG IS SO FAR THE ONLY AREA WHERE INCIDENTS BETWEEN THE AUTHORITIES AND THE BUDDHISTS HAVE BEEN REPORTED. AN QUANG STILL

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APPEARS COMMITTED TO A POLICY OF BALANCING GESTURES OF PROTEST WITH PRUDENCE. ITS FAILURE TO JOIN KY'S NEW GROUP AND ESTABLISHMENT OF AN INDEPENDENT AND APPARENTLY RIVAL ORGANIZATION UNDER LAY LEADERSHIP IS FURTHER EVIDENCE THAT THE BONZES REMAIN DEDICATED TO THEIR PARTISANS, LONG-TERM INTERESTS AND ARE NOT PREPARED TO JOIN IN A CONFRONTATION WITH THE ADMINISTRATION AT THIS TIME.

6. NATIONAL MEETING, OCTOBER 1. LOCAL PRESS AND EMBASSY SOURCES REPORT THAT VICE PRESIDENT KY AND HIS "PEOPLE'S COORDINATING COMMITTEE AGAINST DICTATORSHIP" (PCCAD) WILL SPONSOR A "NATIONAL MEETING"OF RELIGIOUS AND

POLITICAL GROUPS OCTOBER 1. ACCORDING TO PRESS ACCOUNTS SEPT 30 (CHINH LUAN) DEPUTY DUONG VAN BA, PCCAD SPOKESMAN, STATED THAT "ABOUT 2000 GUESTS" HAVE BEEN INVITED AND THAT THE ASSEMBLY WILL DISCUSS PRIMARILY THE ISSUE OF THE OCT. 3 REFERENDUM. COL. VU DUC VINH, KY'S PRESS SPOKESMAN, TOLD EMBOFFS SEPT. 30 THAT THE CONFERENCE WILL ADOPT RESOLUTIONS CALLING FOR AN ELECTION BOYCOTT AND THIEU'S RESIGNATION. THE DELEGATES MAY SUBSEQUENTLY SEEK TO DELIVER THE RESOLUTION TO INDEPENDENCE PALACE. VINH EXPECTS THAT AN QUANG REPRESENTATIVES WILL ATTEND MEETING BUT SAID THAT GENERAL MINH HAS NOT YET DECIDED TO ACCEPT INVITATION. THE LATEST INFORMATION WE HAVE RECEIVED IS THAT THE MEETING WILL CONVENE AT THE GOVERNMENT GUEST HOUSE (NOW USED BY KY) IN THE MORNING, AND THEN MEET AGAIN AT THE UPPER HOUSE AT NOON. (COMMENT: THE "NATIONAL MEETING" APPEARS TO BE A KY MANEUVER TO CONSOLIDATE PERSONAL LEADERSHIP OVER THE OPPOSITION AND TO GENERATE ANTI-THIEU PUBLICITY IN THE US PRESS. SINCE MINH AND AN QUANG APPARENTLY REMAIN ALOOF FROM KY'S EFFORTS, THIS NATIONAL MEETING IS UNLIKELY TO BE A CATALYST FOR UNITING THE OPPOSITION, BUT MAY RESULT IN SERIOUS INCIDENTS BETWEEN POLICE AND DELEGATES WHICH COULD SERVE KY'S INTEREST IN INFLAMING LOCAL OPINION.)

7. SENATE SPEAKS OUT AGAIN. AT A SEPT. 30 MEETING OF THE UPPER HOUSE A NUMBER OF SENATORS, MOSTLY OPPOSITIONISTS, SPOKE OUT AGAIN IN CRITICISM OF THE PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION, ONE SENATOR CLAIMING THE VOTE IN ANY EVENT WILL BE FALSED AND ANOTHER ASKING THE SUPREME COURT TO CALL THE ELECTION

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ILLEGAL. SENATOR TON THAT DINH CONDEMNED PRESS SEIZURES, AND A PROPOSAL WAS OFFERED (BUT NOT ACTED ON) TO CALL ON ACTING PRIME MINISTER VIEN FOR TESTIMONY ON THE SUBJECT.

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L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-10 P-03 RSC-01 PRS-01 SS-14 USIA-12
RSR-01 /086 W
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FM AMEMBASSY SAIGON
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8. PRESIDENT THIEU'S TALK TO POLICE OFFICIALS. THE SEMI-OFFICIAL VIETNAM PRESS ACCOUNT OF PRESIDENT THIEU'S MEETING WITH POLICE OFFICIALS SEPT 29 (REF D) STATES "THE POLICE WAS ORDERED TO 'SHOOT TO KILL' ANY LAWBREAKERS WHO SET FIRE TO VEHICLES OR CREATE DISTURBANCES HARMFUL TO THE PEOPLE'S DAILY LIFE." IT ALSO QUOTES THIEU AS SAYING THE POLICE MUST BE CAREFUL TO DISTRUB THE PEOPLE AS LITTLE AS POSSIBLE WHILE APPREHENDING LAWBREAKERS. (NEWS ACCOUNTS SAY THE PRESIDENT WARNED AGAINST EXCESSIVE USE OF TEAR GAS IN THIS CONNECTION.) ACCORDING TO VIETNAM PRESS THE PRESIDENT SAID "PERSONS OPPOSED TO ME PERSONALLY OR TO THE ELECTION SHOULD VOTE IN GREAT NUMBERS IN ORDER TO SHOW LACK OF CONFIDENCE IN ME RATHER THAN USING VIOLENCE WHICH IS ADVANTAGEOUS ONLY TO THE COMMUNISTS." ITEM GOES ON TO STATE "PRESIDENT NGUYEN VAN THIEU ALSO BELIEVES THAT PEACE IN VIET-NAM WILL BE RESTORED WITHIN ONE OR TWO YEARS AND AT THAT TIME HE WILL RESIGN IN ORDER TO SHOW THAT HE IS NOT AMBITIOUS TO KEEP POWER," AND "PRESIDENT THIEU EXPRESSED THE HOPE THAT THE CHINESE COMMUNISTS HAVE SEEN THAT THEY CANNOT CONTINUE TO SUPPORT NVN, CONTINUING A HOPELESS WAR, AND PERHAPS THEY WILL ACCEPT A PEACE BASED ON

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THE 1954 GENEVA ACCORDS. ACCORDING TO THE OBSERVATIONS OF THE PRESIDENT, AT PRESENT THE COMMUNISTS HAVE BECOME WEAK, AND NVN IS MEETING THE NATURAL DISASTERS AND CANNOT CONTINUE WITH THE WAR, BUT WE MUST NEVERTHELESS MAINTAIN OUR STRENGTH AND NOT GIVE THE COMMUNISTS A CHANCE TO ATTACK AGAIN. " LOCAL PRESS ACCOUNTS ALSO STATE THAT THIEU CONDEMNED THOSE WHO PREVENT PEOPLE FROM VOTING AS INDIVIDUALS WHO ARE SABOTAGING THE NATIONAL REGIME AND ARE OPPOSED TO THE CONSTITUTION, CONFISCATING THE RIGHT TO VOTE OF THE PEOPLE.

9. SOME OF THESE THEMES WERE ECHOED IN AN OFFICIAL COMMUNIQUE RELEASED ON SEPT 30 BY THE PRIME MINISTER' S OFFICE. VIETNAM PRESS'S ENGLISH VERSION OF THE COMMUNIQUE FOLLOWS: BEGIN TEXT. THE FORTHCOMING PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION FOR THE 1971-1975 TERM WILL BE HELD FROM 7 A. M. TO 5 P. M. NEXT OCT 3 IN LINE WITH THE RVN CONSTITUTION AND IN EXCEPTION

OF LAW NO. 009-71 DATED JUNE 23, A COMMUNIQUE ISSUED WEDNESDAY BY THE PRIME MINISTER'S OFFICE SAID. ACCORDING TO THE DOCUMENTS SEIZED FROM THE COMMUNISTS, THE ENEMY OF THE PEOPLE ARE DOING THEIR BEST TO SABOTAGE THE ELECTION, FOR INSTANCE BY INCREASING ATTACKS AGAINST OUTPOSTS, FOEMENTING TROUBLES HARMFUL TO THE NATIONAL SECURITY AND SPREADING "GROUNDLESS" ROMORS ETC., THE COMMUNIQUE ADDED. HOWEVER, WITH ITS DETERMINATION IN THE TASK OF BUILDING DEMOCRACY, THE GOVERNMENT HAS PUT INTO EFFECT EVERY NECESSARY MEASURE TO CRUSH DOWN ANY PLOT OF THE ENEMY. BESIDES, THE SECURITY AGENCIES WERE ALSO ORDERED TO STRICTLY APPLY THE LAWS IN FORCE IN ORDER TO EFFECTIVELY ENSURE SECURITY FOR THE OCT 3 PRESIDENTIAL BALLOT. THE COMMUNIQUE FINALLY APPEALED TO THE ENTIRE PEOPLE TO BE CALM AND VIGILANT AGAINST ANY DECEITFUL PROPAGANDA OF THE ENEMY AND TO ENTHUSIASTICALLY GO TO THE POLLS IN LARGE NUMBERS IN THE OCT 3 ELECTION, SO AS TO VOICE OUT THEIR WILL "MODERATELY AND LEGALLY." END TEXT. BUNKER

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